

## **“Securing America’s Transportation System”**

**Stephen J. McHale**

**Deputy Administrator**

**Transportation Security Administration**

**Transport Security World 2003 Conference**

**Sydney Australia**

**November 14, 2003**

Thank you, Mr. [Brian] Lowell [*CEO, Australian Federation of International Forwarders*] for that kind introduction. It’s a pleasure to be here this morning.

Throughout literary history, the United States has been identified by clever titles that seek to establish an image that we may or may not be proud of. Adam Smith started the trend in 1776 with *The Wealth of Nations* – well maybe not. But then, American writers have evoked less grand personifications such as, *Rogue Nation*; *Prozac Nation*; *Fast Food Nation*; and now most recently, *Emerging Rugby Nation*.... Well... at least they’re honest! While I am immensely proud of our ascension to the upper echelons of rugby lore with such future world rugby powerhouses like Japan, Namibia and Georgia, I most look forward to the day when we beat Australia in the first footy World Cup!

But I’m here today to speak with you about more serious and pressing matters. The organizers of this conference asked me to speak on the rather broad

subject, “Improving Homeland Security.” The thought, I believe, was to share with you the experiences we’ve had since September 11<sup>th</sup>. This is a very broad and far-reaching topic, so I’d like to focus on the area that I am most familiar with – transportation security.

After all, it was because of shortcomings in aviation security that 19 terrorists were allowed onboard four American aircraft. Their attacks against the United States on September 11<sup>th</sup> directly precipitated the creation of my agency, the Transportation Security Administration or TSA. TSA was established because the United States Congress recognized that the Sept. 11 attacks were not just attacks on the financial and military centers of our nation, but also on the transportation system.

Al Qaida wants to destroy our way of life and there is almost nothing more fundamental to our way of life than our freedom of movement – whether in the United States, Australia, New Zealand, or any other freedom-loving nation. We have seen the lengths to which they will go and the carnage and destruction that they leave in their path not only in places like Bali, New York and Washington, but all around the world. We learned the bitter lesson that no matter where you are in the world, the threat of another attack exists. So, destroy our confidence that we can travel and ship our goods safely and securely, and you bring our economies to their knees. We can not allow the terrorists to destroy the very values upon which our societies were built nor destroy our way of life. We can never again allow our transportation systems to be used by terrorists to get to their targets, to be victimized by terrorists, or to be used as weapons of mass destruction against us.

I want to share with you some of the actions that we have taken in the United States and in TSA to secure our transportation system. But before I do that, I want to discuss our strong relationship with Australia in the Asia-Pacific region and across the globe. In today's global economy, where one can move half-way around the world in a matter of hours, and goods can circle the globe in just days, the homeland security of each nation is dependent on the security of the homeland of all nations.

It is through cooperation at the bilateral, regional, and international level that our combined efforts can have the most positive influence. Such influence has been evident at the meetings of ICAO's Aviation Security Panel of Experts, where our joint efforts have proven to be effective in advancing causes of mutual interest. It is also evident in the sharing of aviation security equipment reviews between our governments.

I applaud the Air Security Officer program that you have launched. I am happy to see that U.S. and Australian flights between our nations will have air marshals on board to prevent acts of terrorism.

.....

Information exchange and communication is key to our relationship with Australia in all our joint efforts in the transportation security arena. Consequently, the TSA has a dedicated TSA Representative to Australia, Mr. Scottie Laird, who is based at the U.S. Consulate in Sidney. Scottie works with the Australian Government to share threat information and arrange technical assessments. In addition to his focus on aviation security issues, he also works on maritime and land security issues common to both countries.

Mr. Laird is just one of the many dedicated employees who comprise the TSA. He and thousands like him joined the TSA over the past 20 months. The law that created TSA came with two major mandates: First, federalize the air passenger and baggage screener workforce, and second, screen 100% of all checked baggage for explosives. We had been in business less than a year when we met these deadlines by last New Year's Eve.

I am enormously proud of that effort. It was the greatest mobilization of a U.S. government agency since World War II. Some of the numbers are staggering. Over 1.6 million people applied for passenger and baggage screener positions. We fully assessed over 360,000 of those people, and then hired over 50,000 of the best to provide an amazingly committed work force who have overhauled aviation security across the U.S.

These people came from all walks of life. Many of them interrupted careers to find a way to make their commitment in the post-9/11 environment to what we needed to do as a nation, and they have done it with remarkable drive, with remarkable dedication and with immense professionalism.

We also have in place 158 very carefully selected senior executives as Federal Security Directors responsible for security at the 440 commercial airports across the country. These FSDs have brought a great wealth of military, police, security with aviation experience to the task of securing the aviation system.

To meet the second deadline, baggage screening, we've installed screening equipment in all commercial airports. Much of this equipment consists of large,

mini-van size machines that use CAT-scan technology. To again give you and idea of the scale of our security mobilization – in 2000, about 40 of these machines were ordered *world-wide*. In 2002, we bought *and* installed 1,100 *in the U.S. alone*. These technological innovations, along with the skilled people who operate them, are our key to success. The fusion of highly trained people, cutting edge technology, good intelligence and efficient processes is what enables us to do our job.

It's not only the people whom TSA employs directly that are responsible for identifying and deploying the best technology and training and security systems we can find. Throughout our 20 month history we have partnered closely with some of the best minds and companies in the private sector. Starting from the first days, several major companies loaned us senior executives to lend their expertise to the task of creating TSA. Executives from Disney advised us on line control; executives from Marriot advised us on customs service; executives from Intel oversaw our effort to ramp up production of explosive detection equipment; and executives from Fluor Corporation worked with our industrial engineers to completely revamp our security systems from start to finish. In addition, during the first year and continuing through today, we have partnered with several companies without whom we would not have been successful, including Boeing, Lockheed, Siemens, and Unisys. Unisys, one of the sponsors of this conference, is currently providing TSA headquarters and field offices with IT managed services, infrastructure, and application support at almost 500 locations world wide.

Our ever-evolving strategy incorporates what we call at TSA a *system of systems*. This system of systems is a layered approach to security that provides multiple back-up systems in the event that one system is breached. This approach

makes it much more difficult for a terrorist to be successful – it raises one obstacle after another, which extend far beyond passenger and baggage screening at the airports.

All planes that fly into or within the United States have hardened cockpit doors; we have begun training and deploying armed pilots who have the authority to respond with force if the cockpit door is breached; and we have thousands of federal air marshals who fly on more flights every month than in the past 20 years combined. And, although not as tangible as the rest, but equally important, we have a layer called domain awareness – everything from counter surveillance and intelligence to understanding and anticipating industry trends. We are constantly trying to identify and respond to evolving threats by tweaking or adjusting our other systems, or, as appropriate, adding an entirely new system. The job is never done, and we can never become complacent if we want to stay one step ahead of the terrorists.

In short, TSA has fundamentally transformed how every man, woman, and child receives security in aviation in the U.S. And we do it with courtesy and respect and thoroughness. As we like to say – we touch, literally, 1.8 million people every day! Based on the feedback we get from the public, the response has been overwhelmingly positive. Bottom line: People feel safer, more secure than they have since 9/11. And that speaks volumes. What also speaks volumes is that passenger flows in the US have begun to approach pre-9/11 levels, and we'd like to think that we've had a role in that by restoring the confidence of the traveling public.

Sometimes we lose perspective on what we have accomplished because there is so much more to do, but it is important that we look back occasionally and reflect upon where we were on 9/11 and where we are today.

But, we can't pause for long, for our job at TSA is not limited to aviation. The Transportation Security Administration has the formidable task of ensuring the security of all modes of transportation including maritime, highway, transit, rail, and pipeline. There is still more to do to accomplish our transportation security mission. Much of this additional work is about understanding the bigger picture of our national transportation security system, which is intermodal, interdependent, and international in scope. The immense scope of this work is beyond the reach of any one agency, and in recognition of this fact, the US Congress established the Department of Homeland Security, which we joined in March of this year. Under the leadership of Secretary Tom Ridge, the new Department has three primary missions:

- Prevent terrorist attacks on the United States,
- Reduce America's vulnerability to terrorism, and
- Minimize the damage from attacks and natural disasters

The TSA, along with 21 other agencies, including the US Coast Guard, the Bureau of Customs and Border Protection and the US Secret Service are aligned in four directorates within the new Department. We all share a joint mission and a common cause of preventing another event like 9/11 from happening again. The TSA has a lead role for accomplishing this mission in the transportation arena.

Consequently, around the time that TSA joined the Department of Homeland Security earlier this year, we embarked upon developing a national strategy for the entire transportation system. This strategy, which has resulted in the National Transportation System Security Plan, represents a significant step forward in connecting the pieces of the cross-modal security puzzle. This plan is one of the pieces of the overall strategy that DHS must pull together to secure all 13 sectors of the United States' critical infrastructure.

The National Transportation Security Plan addresses each mode of transportation individually and all of the inter-relationships among these modes – a daunting challenge. It looks at cargo transfers from ship to train to truck to plane. It has to deal with general aviation and commercial. It has to look at passengers disembarking from cruise ships and flying back home. We've only begun to address the vulnerabilities of our national railway network, transit, pipeline, and highway transportation. We're working closely with the U.S. Coast Guard on maritime and port security initiatives.

I'd like to share with you a couple of the projects and efforts that TSA is conducting under the umbrella of our National Transportation System Security Plan.

One project that is of great importance, and I think, of interest to you, is CAPPS II, or the Computer-Assisted Passenger Prescreening System. This is the next generation for CAPPS I which is in use today at airports across the U.S. CAPPS I is a tool of the pre-9/11 days, actually launched because of the Pan-Am Lockerbie incident, and one that is inadequate to meet today's threat. And so we are developing CAPPS II – a new system that will allow us to gain much greater



confidence in the process by which we select people to get additional scrutiny before we allow them on an aircraft to, from or within the United States.

The objective for this system is to allow us to focus our resources on those people who are much more likely to pose a threat to the security of an aircraft, while not subjecting people in whom we have confidence to over burdensome security. We can do this by quickly – in fact, in no more than 5 seconds -- authenticating a passenger's identity and analyzing the security risk that individual poses to the aircraft and fellow passengers.

CAPPS II is a narrowly defined system that collects as little information as possible while still fulfilling its security mandate. For the vast majority of passengers, CAPPS II will be less intrusive while making sure that the person you are sitting next to on a flight poses no security threat.

I know that the protection of privacy and civil liberties is just as much a concern here as it is in the U.S. So let me try to clarify some common misperceptions....

Let me start with what CAPPS 2 is:

- It is a government owned and operated risk assessment tool
- It is scalable, flexible, proven, and consistent, and
- An important element of our system of systems

And let me emphasize what CAPPS 2 will NOT do:

- It will NOT data mine.
- It will NOT profile based on race, ethnicity, or religion.

- It will NOT store vast amounts of information on passengers.

CAPPS II is the best solution available to make sure that a terrorist, whether an American citizen or a foreign national, does not get onto a plane when he or she could pose a threat to other passengers or the aircraft.

In the maritime arena, one program that TSA has been proud to shepherd is a program to secure the entire supply chain. Last summer, we distributed \$58 million in grant monies to several ports around the United States as part of Operation Safe Commerce. These monies are directed to these ports to accomplish the following actions: (1) identify specific supply chains along particular trade routes and (2) analyze every aspect of the supply chain from packaging to delivery for vulnerabilities. Based on their analysis – the ports will propose plans to improve security throughout the supply chain. Let me highlight one such challenge in the supply chain by taking an example from the United States. In just over a 24-hour period, highway cargo arriving into the Port of Jacksonville, Florida, has the potential to reach every city and town from the tip of Texas to Times Square in New York, and from Key West to the Ambassador Bridge in Detroit. A potential threat spreads very quickly, and can spread almost as quickly clear across the globe.

There are two other key international truth initiatives under the Department of Homeland Security that I think would be of interest here since shipping is so critical to Australia's economy. One of these initiatives is the Container Security Initiative, or CSI. The Container Security Initiative is led by our sister agency, the Bureau of Customs and Border Protection. Nearly 50 percent of the value of all imports into the United States arrive via sea container, thus pushing the borders of

our homeland to the ports of all of our major trading partners. Consequently, the Bureau of Customs and Border Protection established a program in which high-risk maritime cargo containers are identified and examined for weapons of mass destruction (WMD) at foreign ports before they are shipped to the United States. US agents are deployed at over 20 foreign ports that collectively represent nearly 70% of the goods that enter the United States, to work with authorities from the host nations to pre-screen cargo before it's loaded onto ships bound for the U.S.

The other program is, C-TPAT, or Customs-Trade Partnership Against Terrorism (C-TPAT). Under this program thousands of U.S. commercial importers have taken steps to secure their entire supply chain. Under the C-TPAT plan, participating private concerns providing verifiable security information will receive preferential treatment during the shipping process. The result: Security enhancements put in place by private sector shippers allows the Department to devote more of our resources to suspect activities.

I've mentioned but a few of the total number of programs and projects that the TSA and our sister agencies in the Department of Homeland Security are leading to secure the homeland. While we cannot forget, and sometimes overlook that 9/11 was planned and executed entirely on our own soil, the future of homeland security is international in scope. Fundamentally, all peace loving nations need to share intelligence, information, and work jointly in today's global economy. "Our" homeland security is dependent upon "Your" homeland security, and vice versa. There is no way of getting around this. As many of the projects I spoke about demonstrate, our ability to secure the United States is inextricably linked to the security of nations around the world.

One final example that I'd like to share that underscores the need for international cooperation is countering the threat from shoulder-launched missiles to aviation security. Recent events in Iraq have tragically demonstrated the impact of these missiles, and the impact on commercial aviation and national economies would be astronomically greater if an act was perpetrated here or in the United States. Earlier this year I spoke at an Asian Pacific Economic Cooperation conference in Bangkok about this threat. One of the key points that I mentioned, and a key element of our strategy to counter this threat, is non-proliferation. There are hundreds of thousands of these missiles, mostly safely stored in national stockpiles around the world. However, as we have seen in Iraq and Kenya recently, many of these missiles are in the hands of rogue groups who have no second thoughts about using them to destroy the will of those who wish to do good. It will take international cooperation and partnerships to secure the current stockpiles and buy back those missiles currently on the grey market. Under the leadership of President Bush and PM Howard, APEC has now initiated a major program to accomplish this objective, but much remains to be done.

Similar focused and coordinated international effort recently led Australian authorities to Willie Virgile Brigitte. It's the connecting of the dots, as we like to say, that we need to do *before* the next terrorist cell succeeds in perpetrating another atrocity. And that analysis must include sharing international resources and information.

Transportation security--like homeland security--is a collaborative effort. TSA has already established critical relationships with members of the international community, as well as our domestic federal, state and local intelligence units, law enforcement, and other agencies. Securing the entire length

of the supply chain, whether it is the thousands of kilometers traveled by a product manufactured in Peoria, Illinois and shipped to a store in Sidney, or for a product that is shipped from Brisbane to a store in Los Angeles. Cooperation along each and every step of this supply chain is required. Protecting the supply chain will require a collaborative effort among government and private sector owners, operators, and users of the transportation system. We each have a role and a responsibility in identifying vulnerabilities and developing effective security countermeasures.

While our challenge is immense, our resolve steadfast. I often like to remind people when I speak on the subject of securing OUR homeland security – and I mean OUR in an inclusive sense -- of one simple, yet alarming thought. The bad guys only have to get it right once. We have to get it right every time! Therefore, we must always stay one step ahead of the terrorists.

Our continuing relationship with Australia is a mutually beneficial one that contributes to the improvement of aviation security and homeland security in the Asia-Pacific region and across the globe. Our partnership can accomplish this and so much more. I know that in working together we can help to bring security to all aspects of transportation, and in the end, benefit the entire world. We look forward to working with you, and extending the friendship and alliance between the United States and Australia.

Thank you very much. If you have any questions, I'll be happy to field a few ...